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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Multiagency Investigation Results in Arrest of Serial Robber**

#### **SUMMARY:**

On 11/17/12 Beaverton Police investigated the reported robbery of a Cricket Store. In the course of the investigation it was revealed that the suspect was responsible for multiple robberies in Beaverton, Tigard, and Hillsboro. Detectives from all three agencies worked together and ultimately arrested the suspect of these robberies. The suspect's sister was also arrested for being the getaway driver in at least one of the robberies. The investigation and arrests were the result of a collaborative effort by Beaverton, Tigard, and Hillsboro Police Departments.

#### **DETAILS:**

On 11/17/12 at 10:13am Beaverton Police responded to the report of an armed robbery at the Cricket Wireless Store located at 14349 SW Allen Blvd. The lone female employee reported that a male dressed in all black with a gun robbed her of cash and Bluetooth devices, struck her in the face and forced her into a large box before fleeing the store. A witness observed the suspect running from the scene and was able to get the license plate of the vehicle he jumped into.

Beaverton Detectives responded and began an investigation. Based on the provided license plate, officers and detectives later located the suspect vehicle and identified the lone female driver as 26 year old Stena Mae Mejia. The investigation revealed that Mejia was the getaway driver and she was arrested and later lodged on one count of Robbery in the first degree. More charges are possible as the investigation has revealed the possibility that Mejia was involved in additional robberies.

Evidence found in the vehicle was linked to a Dutch Brothers Coffee Shop Robbery in Tigard on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The unfolding investigation determined that there were multiple robberies Beaverton, Tigard and Hillsboro that appeared to be the work of the same suspect.

Detectives from Tigard and Hillsboro Police Departments were notified of the possible lead in their respective robberies. Detectives from Hillsboro and Tigard responded and joined forces with Beaverton Detectives in a collaborative effort to work on what was now shaping up to be a comprehensive serial robber investigation.

From interviews and evidence collected a suspect was developed. The suspect was believed to be 24 year old Merle “Dee” Stedman, the brother of Stena Mejia. Detectives worked to locate Stedman and were able to take him into custody on the following evening (Sunday, 11/18/12). Stedman ultimately cooperated with the investigation and led investigators to the gun used in some of the robberies (hidden in the woods). The gun was a black pellet gun that was an exact replica of a 1911 semiautomatic handgun. A search warrant was executed on Stedman’s residence and additional evidence of the robberies was located. Stedman was charged with multiple counts of robbery with the possibility of more charges pending.

Stedman is responsible for and charged with the following six robberies:

- May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Cricket Store, 12025 SW Allen Blvd, Beaverton. Robbery using a wrench as a weapon. Cash and Bluetooth devices stolen.
- October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012, Dutch Brothers Coffee, 11746 SW Pacific Hwy, Tigard. Robbery with a knife. Money, iPhone, and victims identification stolen (later found in suspect vehicle on 11/17/12).
- November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Blackrock Coffee, 15290 SW Pacific Hwy, Tigard. Robbery with a knife. Money stolen.
- November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Blackrock Coffee, 15290 SW Pacific Hwy, Tigard. Robbery with a knife. Money stolen.
- November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Cricket Store, 101 NE 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Hillsboro. Robbery with a gun. Cash and victims tablet and wallet stolen.
- November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Cricket Store, 14349 SW Allen Blvd, Beaverton. Robbery with a gun. Cash and Bluetooth devices stolen.

The victim of the two Beaverton Cricket stores listed is one in the same. After the first Beaverton Cricket Store robbery the victim was very shaken up by the incident. She was moved to another store when that store was robbed. In the second robbery she was struck in the face and placed into a large box by the suspect. This victim is very shaken up by these events and does not wish to go on camera at this time. The victim was very elated to hear that the suspect had been arrested and was in custody.

The success of this investigation was the result of the collaborative efforts of Beaverton, Tigard, and Hillsboro police departments. All three departments expended resources and personnel to assist in this investigation. This case is a good example of the collaborative efforts of these three agencies working together to accomplish the goal.